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THE STATE  
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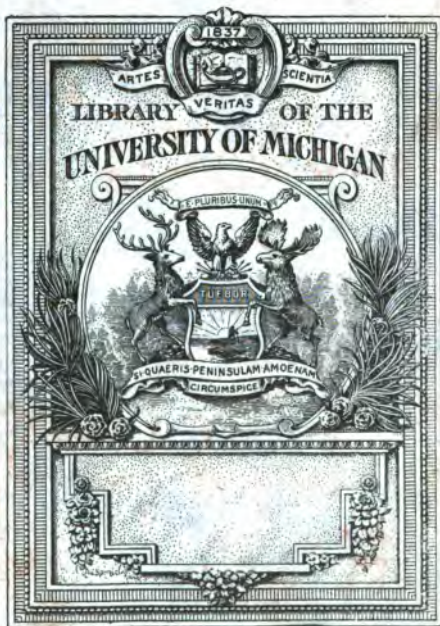
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BY THE  
REV. WILLIAM HARNESS, A.M.  
PERPETUAL CURATE OF ALL SAINTS,  
KNIGHTSBRIDGE.

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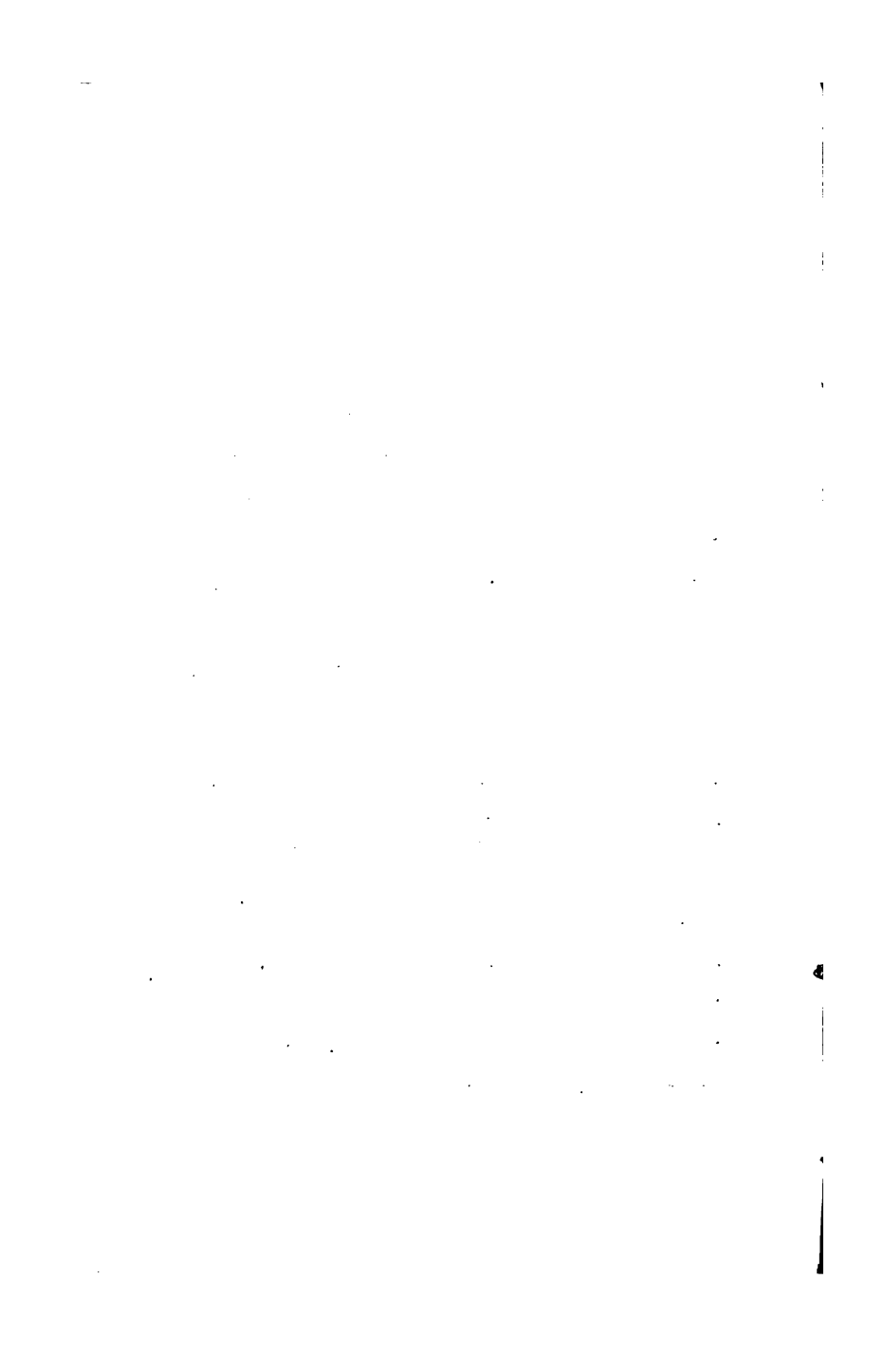
## PREFACE.

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THIS Pamphlet is a reprint of the article on "Paragraph Bibles," which appeared in the "Edinburgh Review" of October last. In it the author endeavoured, as clearly and concisely as he could, to show the reasons, why he thought the authorised version of the Sacred Scriptures should be subjected to a careful and immediate revision. The favourable manner in which his opinions were received, has convinced him that the necessity of such a revision is very widely felt. And he has been induced to reprint the article, in the hope that, by giving it a further and cheaper circulation, public attention may be more generally attracted to the importance of the subject, and the object which he has so deeply at heart, more speedily attained.

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THE STATE  
OF  
THE ENGLISH BIBLE.

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*The Annotated Paragraph Bible ; containing the Old and New Testaments according to the Authorized Version, arranged in Paragraphs, with Explanatory Notes, &c. Published by the Religious Tract Society, London : 1853.*

It is, we believe, universally agreed among Protestants of all denominations, that the Bible is their one, great, paramount religious authority ; that they repudiate all traditionary lore or human teaching ; and that every man, depending on his own judgment, and availing himself of his right to use it, looks to the Sacred Scriptures, and the Sacred Scriptures alone, for the spiritual light which should inform his faith and direct his conduct. Such is the


theory ; but it is little more than a theory. If Christians acted upon it honestly and more freely than they do, they would in all probability find their differences diminish and their charity increase. But the fact is, that the right of private judgment in religion is a principle more vaunted than exercised. And the experience of society would lead us to infer that, while we and the rest of our fellow Protestants profess to follow the instructions of the Bible, we are far more generally led by the opinions of our respective ministers ; and that our doctrinal views are never so much really derived from the letter of the Sacred Text as from the notes of some favourite expositor in the margin. This, perhaps, is no more than might be naturally expected. It is the consequence either of an intellectual indolence, which would evade the task of elaborating the truth for itself ; or of a praiseworthy humility, which feels its powers incompetent to the task ; or of a certain timidity of conscience, which, shrinking from the peril of incurring error in so momentous a subject, would fain

rest the responsibility of decision on another's judgment. But whatever influences may interfere to warp its operation, all Protestants, whether Churchmen or Dissenters, are agreed in the principle, that our only authoritative religious teacher is the Bible; and that "as  
" there is no truth nor doctrine necessary to  
" our justification and everlasting salvation,  
" but which is, or may be, drawn out of that  
" fountain and well of truth; therefore, as  
" many as be desirous to enter into the right  
" and perfect way unto God, must apply their  
" minds to know Holy Scripture, without the  
" which they can neither sufficiently know God  
" and His will, neither their office and duty."\*

Since the Bible, then, is of such inestimable value—the depository of all religious and moral truth—the sacred ark in which the history and the subject-matter of the Creator's communications to His creatures are preserved; we might very reasonably have presumed that it would be regarded with a reverence corre-

\* Homily on Reading the Holy Scriptures. Part I.

spondent to its importance, and that, in the copies of it disseminated among the people, every care would be taken not only to render the translation an exact reflection of the sense of the original, but to place the work before them in such a convenient form as might induce them to read it, and accompanied by such useful typographical aids as might facilitate their understanding what they read. It might have been fairly expected that, in publishing a work which is of such momentous consequence to us all both here and hereafter, the text would have been carefully divided into paragraphs according to the sense; that what was spoken would have been placed between inverted commas; and that all passages taken by one sacred writer from another would either have been printed in italics, or in some easily intelligible manner distinguished as a quotation. It would have been no more than reasonable to assume that among a Protestant people, — setting the high value upon them which we do, — esteeming them as our sole authority in religion, — the Sacred Scriptures



would have been published with at least as much consideration for the reader's convenience as the writings of our popular poets and novelists; and that there would be editions, not only of every variety of size and type, which might prove attractive to the taste of the wealthy, or be adapted to the limited means of the poor, but which might be demanded by the infirmities of our aged and suffering brother Christians. But the very reverse of this is the case. There is no other class of works, whether we regard the size, the type, or the distribution of the letter-press, in which we find that so little has been done to assist the reader, and so much to perplex him, as in the Sacred Scriptures. If it had been the object to multiply their difficulties, to prejudice their meaning, and to deter men from the perusal of them, we doubt whether the most accomplished Jesuit could have devised any more effectual mode of publication than that which has been generally adopted, and almost universally prevails. No works of inferior value could have maintained their ground against the treatment

they have encountered. We are not ignorant of the several editions of the Bible which exist; and we fearlessly declare that we have never yet met with any copy of the Bible which we could take up and read without either wearying the hand or straining the sight. There are dear Bibles and cheap Bibles: there are Bibles so large that you can only with difficulty raise them; and there are Bibles so small that they can be carried about in your pocket: there are Bibles of which the paper is as glossy as satin and as thick as paste-board; and there are Bibles of which the paper is so dark that the printing is hardly discernible, and so thin that the leaves crumple up beneath your finger in turning the pages: but, nevertheless, among all those innumerable and variously diversified editions, no Bible has been hitherto produced which can be read with as much ease and comfort as any ordinary book. There is no such thing as a *readable* Bible.

This great evil in one respect results from a sort of superstitious notion that the Sacred

Scriptures must be all brought together into a single volume. But why? Superstition cannot condescend to answer our inquiry, and we are incapable of finding any intelligible solution for it ourselves. Such a collective form of publication may be useful for the purpose of reference; and to the clergyman, in the composition of his sermons, it may be a desirable thing to have the whole body of works, from which his proofs and his illustrations are to be drawn, thus lying ready to his hand, compendiously before him. But for the laity — the great body of Christian people — such an arrangement is as unnecessary as it is cumbersome. We have all taught ourselves to look upon the Bible as a single religious book; but it is, in fact, a library of religious books. It consists of works composed by different authors, treating of different subjects, and written at widely different times; and it is only one book, inasmuch as these works are all bound up together in one binding. On ordinary occasions, there are no two of the productions thus compressed between the same



boards that we are likely to want at the same moment. And if a man would fain take his evening walk into the fields with the Prophecies of Isaiah as his companion, it is no light grievance to him that he must either forego his inclination, or carry along with him at the same time the Law of Moses and the History of the Jews; the Psalms of David and the Proverbs of Solomon; the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles; the Epistles and the Apocalypse. The probability is, that the sight of the encumbrance will be sufficient to counteract his purpose, and direct his attention to some other and far inferior author. This principle of having all the compositions of all the sacred writers collected together in the same volume, has induced the practice of printing our Bibles in double columns; because it is the form by which the greatest number of words can be squeezed into one page. But, notwithstanding this offensive mode of distributing the text, which is puzzling to the sight, by which the attention is disturbed, and which is only adopted in the cheapest and most

inferior editions of other works, the book is so big and heavy, when the type is large enough to be easily read, that no hand of moderate strength can hold it; or, when the book is of a moderate weight and dimensions, the type is so minute as to be only legible by eyes of youthful strength and microscopic power. In the "Annotated Paragraph Bible," of which the title stands at the head of this article, the double column, with some other disadvantages that obtain in the ordinary editions of the English Scriptures, have been got rid of. That is no inconsiderable gain. But the determination to compress the works of all the inspired authors into a single volume, has brought its inseparable mischiefs along with it; an unwieldy book, a small, sharp, dazzling character, and a length of line which it is very difficult to follow.

But this pernicious system of compression is not, by any means, the most greivous injury to which the sacred text has been subjected by editors and printers. This is a slight evil in comparison with the mischief that has been

inflicted on the sense of the inspired writings by the mode of breaking them up into chapter and verse which has been uniformly adopted. These divisions, which have no existence in the original, have been made without any authority whatever. They were introduced for the purpose of liberating the theological student from the necessity of attaining a deep and accurate knowledge of the Scriptures, by placing in his hands a Concordance, which the Sacred Text had been notched and scored to tally with, and by which he may be readily assisted to the discovery of any passage he may chance to want. About the middle of the thirteenth century, Cardinal Hugo de Santo Caro projected a *Concordance* to the Latin Vulgate, and divided the Old and New Testament into chapters. Rabbi Nathan, in the fifteenth century, in preparing a *Concordance* of the Hebrew Scriptures, subdivided the chapters into verses. Robert Stephens, in the sixteenth century, passed simultaneously through the press a New Testament and a *Concordance*; and,—so at least his son Henry tells us,—while

travelling on horseback between Lyons and Paris, he cut the New Testament into verses for the sake of adapting it to his *Concordance*.\* This, we believe, is in brief the most approved account of the origin of those divisions and subdivisions, by which our editions of the Bible are disfigured. No other book ever suffered such irreverend treatment. In all other compositions, the paragraph ends where the sense pauses; in the Sacred Scriptures, whatever the sense may be, every third or fourth line brings the reader to the end of the paragraph. They are the only works we happen to be acquainted with, in which the correct arrangement of the author's text has been rendered subordinate to the facility of reference. And we are quite sure, that they alone are endowed with a sufficient force of vitality to outlive so cruel a process of mutilation.

The practice of breaking the text of Scripture into verses would, under any circum-

\* See "Horne's Introduction to the Holy Scriptures," vol. ii. pp. 155—158. Second Edition.

stances, prove most injurious to the right apprehension of its meaning. It is the immediate cause of much misconception. Passages of Holy Writ, thus insulated, receive a kind of independent character. The sense of each little paragraph seems drawn to a point; and the careless or unlettered reader is apt to confine his attention to the few words thus placed in an aphoristic form before him, and to accept them as a distinct enunciation of some religious dogma; whereas, if they had been presented to his eye in connexion with their context, he would at once have received them in their right meaning, and been spared the error into which the present deceptive mode of printing the volume has betrayed him. We cannot conceive any case in which evil would not have resulted from the introduction of our divisions of Chapter and Verse. With whatever care the Sacred Text had been cut into such minute sections, those minute sections must necessarily have had a tendency to mislead the reader. But they have not been carefully made. The only end contemplated in making

them was, to fit the Bible to the Concordance. And that this might be effectually accomplished, every other consideration—the progress of the narrative—the beauty of the poetry—the theological argument—and even the grammatical construction of the sentences, have been continually disregarded. We need not enlarge on the detriment which the eloquence, the pathos, the impression, the very intelligibility of the Sacred Writings, have incurred from this reckless and fractional mode of subdivision. But to show that we have not at all exaggerated the mischief we complain of, we will adduce some instances, which are taken almost at random, and which could be multiplied *ad libitum*, of the senseless mutilation that the Sacred Text has suffered in the process.

Our first example shall be a passage from the historical portion of Scripture. We will give it, as it would properly stand, if printed according to the original, and unmarred by the inventions of the concordance makers. We read in the book of Joshua, “And it came to

“ pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he  
“ lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold,  
“ there stood a man over against him with his  
“ sword drawn in his hand: And Joshua went  
“ unto him, and said unto him, ‘ *Art thou for us*  
“ *or for our adversaries?*’ And he said, ‘ *Nay;*  
“ *but as the captain of the host of the Lord am*  
“ *I now come.*’ And Joshua fell on his face to  
“ the earth, and did worship, and said unto  
“ him, ‘ *What saith my Lord unto his servant?*’  
“ And the captain of the Lord’s host said unto  
“ Joshua, ‘ *Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for*  
“ *the place whereon thou standest is holy.*’ And  
“ Joshua did so. (Now Jericho was straitly shut  
“ up, because of the children of Israel: none  
“ went out and none came in.) And the Lord  
“ said unto Joshua, ‘ *See, I have given into thine*  
“ *hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the*  
“ *mighty men of valour,*’ &c. The angel of  
the Lord, in the words that follow, appoints the  
measures which were to precede the miraculous  
dowthrow of the walls of Jericho, and which  
need not be repeated here, as we only wish to  
show the manner in which a simple passage of

history has been injured in the printing. There can be no doubt but it ought to be given as it stands above, in unbroken succession. But how is it printed in our English Bibles? It is cut in two in the midst. One part is found at the end of the fifth chapter of Joshua, the other part at the beginning of the sixth. And at what point is the break in the narrative introduced? It is divided at the commencement of the parenthesis, in which, with a view of rendering the concluding words of the angel of the Lord more intelligible to the reader, the historian states that Jericho was at the time besieged by the children of Israel. This is bewildering enough. By most readers of the Common Version, it would be conceived, that the verses which conclude the fifth chapter and those which open the sixth, instead of conveying the continuous account of the same Divine visitation, related to two separate appearances of the angel of the Lord.

But, perhaps, the mischief is less felt in the narrative than in the poetic portions of the Bible. And we will adduce an instance in



proof of the manner in which not only the beauty, but even the intelligibility, of the sacred odes of the Prophets suffer from the received method of dividing them. We will take an example from Isaiah. The following lines contain an entire prophecy. They are given in the words of our Common Version, but printed in accordance with the system of parallelism, which is the prominent peculiarity of Hebrew versification.

PROPHETIC ODE FROM ISAIAH.

“The Lord sent a word unto Jacob ; and it hath lighted  
upon Israel.  
And all the people shall know, even Ephraim and the  
inhabitants of Samaria,  
That say, in the pride and stoutness of heart,  
The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn  
stones ;  
The sycamores are cut down, but we will change them  
into cedars.  
Therefore the Lord shall set up the adversaries of Rezin  
against him,  
And join his enemies together ;  
The Syrians before and the Philistines behind ;  
And they shall devour Israel with open mouth.  
For all this, His anger is not turned away,  
But His hand is stretched out still.

For the people turneth not unto Him that smiteth them,  
Neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts.

Therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel

Head and tail, branch\* and rush, in one day :

The Ruler and the Honourable, he is the head,

And the Prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.

For the leaders of this people cause them to err ;

And they that are led of them are destroyed.

Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young  
men,

Neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows ;

For every one is an hypocrite and an evil-doer,

And every mouth speaketh folly.

For all this, His anger is not turned away,

But His hand is stretched out still.

For wickedness burneth as the fire ;

It shall devour the briers and thorns,

And shall kindle in the thickets of the forest,

And they shall mount up, like the lifting up of smoke.

Through the wrath of the Lord of Hosts is the land  
darkened †,

And the people shall be as the fuel of the fire :

No man shall spare his brother.

And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry ;

And he shall eat on the left hand, and shall not be  
satisfied :

They shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm :

\* *i. e.* the *palm branch*, which grows aloft, and is  
most appropriately contrasted with the *rush*, which  
springs from the ground.

† Burnt up.

Manasseh Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh ;  
And they together shall be against Judah.

For all this, His anger is not turned away,  
But His hand is stretched out still.

Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees,  
And that write grievousness which they have prescribed ;  
To turn aside the needy from judgment,  
And to take away the right from the poor of my people ;  
That widows may be their prey ;  
And that they may rob the fatherless.  
And what will ye do in the day of visitation,  
And in the desolation which shall come from far ?  
To whom will ye flee for help ?  
And where will be your glory ?  
Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners,  
And they shall fall under the slain.

For all this, His anger is not turned away,  
But His hand is stretched out still."

The above passage from Isaiah is a distinct and unconnected poem. It is as much an entire composition in itself, as an ode of Collins or of Gray. And it conveys a very sublime denunciation against the wickedness of the Jews and an appalling picture of the judicial inflictions with which the Almighty was about to punish them. But if the reader look for it in his Bible, without some especial directions, the

chances are that he will have no little difficulty in discovering it. In our Common Version, the poem is not only preceded and followed by extraneous matter, but is actually cleft in two, by a division of chapters. Its three fine opening stanzas will be found at the conclusion of the *ninth* chapter of Isaiah, and the remaining stanza at the beginning of the *tenth* !

We abstain from laying before our readers any particular errors that have been made in the typographical distribution of the text of the New Testament ; but the general sense of that most holy volume has been more perniciously affected by the chapter and verse divisions of Robert Stephens, than any portion of the Old Testament by the officious meddling of his predecessors. What would be the effect on the understanding of the student, if a *Metaphysical Essay* of Dugald Stewart were set before him, in a form as lacerated and severed as that in which he is condemned to read the *Theological Essays* of St. Paul ? Would he not find himself lost in a sort of labyrinth of words, amid which he was unable,

on account of the continually recurring breaks in the sentences, to trace the connection of the ideas? A very intelligent friend of ours declares, that he never could comprehend the drift of the Epistle to the Romans, till he read it, without the interruptions of chapter and verse, in Shuttleworth's translation. And we entirely sympathise with him in his embarrassment. We repeat that no other work whatever would have possessed internal life enough to bear up against, and maintain its place in public estimation under, the usage to which the Bible has been subjected by its editors. We had, at one time, intended to evince the deteriorating and enfeebling effect of such an injurious process of division, by printing two or three of the finest passages from our own authors, snipt into pieces and severed, without any sense of compunction, from their context, as the Sacred Scriptures are printed; but we have refrained in tenderness for the feelings of our readers. We spare them the exhibition of so distressing a martyrdom. And, perhaps, the introduction of such a curiosity would

rather serve to extend the length of our article, than add force to our argument. In the "Annotated Paragraph Bible," the text has not been subjected to any such vicious dismemberment; and, if the volume were less inconvenient to the hand, and the character more easy to the eye, we could have little fault to find with the typographical arrangements of the editor.

But is not the condition of our common English Bibles obnoxious to charges of a far more grave description, than those which we have already noticed, and which merely relate to the size of the volume and the distribution of the letter-press? Does the translation itself present that full, correct, and distinct expression of the sense of the original, which all Christian people, who look to the sacred volume as their paramount religious authority, would be desirous of possessing; and which all, who entertain a pious reverence for its contents, would be anxious to afford them? We do not ask this question unadvisedly, or from a desire of putting forward any peculiar

theory or favourite devices of our own. We make the inquiry simply, as the advocate of those Christian laymen, who sincerely wish to learn what the Sacred Scriptures were designed to teach them ; whose only means of acquiring a saving knowledge of the truth is an accurate translation, and who look to the zeal and learning of their ecclesiastical superiors for the grant of so reasonable a demand. We studiously place ourselves in the position of persons, who are utterly ignorant of the original languages, and whose only information respecting the state of our national version is derived from the most patent and familiar sources, the notes of Scott, of Adam Clarke, of D'Oyley, and Mant, and of the Paragraph Bible : and we ask whether any man, with the continual emendations which are suggested in these commentaries before him, can entertain the persuasion, that our common English Bible really does afford an adequate representation of the sense of the Inspired Writings, or that it should be allowed any longer to remain in its present unimproved condition ?

What was the opinion of Selden, a high authority on such a subject, at the time of its last revision? "There is no book," says that learned man, "so translated as the Bible for the purpose. If I translate a French book into English, I turn it into English phrase and not into French-English. '*Il fait froid*,' I say, 'It is cold;' not 'It makes cold:' but the Bible is rather translated into English words, than into English phrase. The Hebraisms are kept, and the phrase of that language is kept; which is well enough so long as scholars have to do with it; but when it comes among the common people, Lord, what gear do they make of it!"\* Most extraordinary, indeed, is the *gear* they make of it! And none but those, who may have had the curiosity to turn occasionally into some of our country conventicles, in which the neighbouring tailor, or the journeyman cobbler, officiates as the expositor of the Sacred Text, can imagine the miserable misapprehensions to which this peculiar, literal,

\* Selden's Table Talk.



word for word, mode of rendering the Scriptures has given rise. It may, perhaps, be worth while to cite a few instances of the Hebrew phrases to which Selden alluded, and which, as literally translated, bewilder the understanding of the reader:—"A covenant of salt," means "a friendly contract;" "they are crushed in the gate," means "they are found guilty in a court of justice;" "branch and rush," means "the highest and lowest;" "the calves of our lips," means "praises and thanksgivings;" "rising early," means "acting with alacrity;" "I have given you cleanness of teeth," means "extreme scarcity." Such are the sort of Hebraisms which have been retained; and, as Selden says, "What gear do the common people make of them!" But is it fair to the devotional feelings of the less educated classes of our countrymen, that the Bible should be placed before them in so ambiguous a form without any explanatory notice, and that at the same time any one should be allowed, whether qualified or unqualified, to interpret it to them as he will?

But if this scheme of word for word translation was to be adopted, why was it not uniformly carried out? Why is the same word differently translated in different passages, though its signification is the same in all of them? Why is *παρακαλεῖν* sometimes *comfort*, and, at others, either *console*, *beseech*, *entreat*, *desire*, or *exhort*? Why is *ἀγάπη* *love* throughout the Gospels, but occasionally exchanged for *charity* in the Epistles; a word adopted from the Vulgate, and only intelligible to the classical theologian, who knows that *love* is a fruit of *grace*; that *grace* is English for *χάρις*; that *χάρις* is the etymological root of *charity*, and that, consequently, *charity* may be used as a synonyme for *love*? Why is *ἀδόκιμος* ordinarily rendered *reprobate*, and on one occasion (1 Cor. ix. 27.) *cast-away*? Of the text last referred to, the present Archbishop of Canterbury says,—“This is one of the many passages, which have suffered by the general bias of the age in which our translation was made.”\* That “general bias” was Cal-

\* “Apostolic Preaching,” p. 18. Third Edit. note.

vinistic,—the bias, in our opinion, which is most thoroughly at variance with the spirit of the Gospel: but whether Calvinistic, or Arian, or Socinian, or Arminian, or of whatever party, if a tendency in favour of any particular school of theology be discoverable in the pages of our version, and the sense of the original has been warped by it, are we justified in permitting it to remain? On the contrary, are we not guilty of a very great irreverence and wrong, in allowing the poison to continue there and to mix its taint with the waters that flow from the well-spring of eternal truth? We will, on this point, confine our observations to the New Testament. Is the translation of that holy book such as it ought to be? The Rev. Arthur Stanley\*, in his recent and very learned edition of “St. Paul’s Epistles to the Corinthians,” mentions *five* kinds of error

\* Vol. ii. p. 311, 312. This work is full of information; but we do not approve of the divisions that the author has introduced. The Apostle’s text should have been, we think, printed continuously, and only broken into paragraphs.

which exist in our received version of them, and which he has rectified in his own. His emendations are,—“1st. Such as are produced by a restoration of the text of the ancient MSS. 2nd. Such as are produced by a better system of punctuation. 3rd. Such as are produced by transposing the words into a nearer conformity with the original order. 4th. Such as are produced by bringing out the emphasis of words, apparent in the original text, either from the use of the pronoun, or from the place of the words in the sentence. 5th. Such as are produced by inaccuracy of translation.” Mr. Stanley gives instances of the corrections that he has made of mistakes, arising out of all the five sources of error enumerated above. The inaccuracies, resulting from these causes, are not restricted to the Epistles to the Corinthians. They may be found in every book of the New Testament. Prof. Scholefield, no incompetent authority, published before his death a small volume\*

\* “Hints for an Improved Translation of the New Testament.”

of some 170 pages, full of suggestions for the improvement of our translation. And, though there are very many corrections that have been pointed out by others which he has omitted to notice, we are not aware of any that he has mentioned which ought not to be received. In fact, that our English version of the Sacred Scriptures is very far from being unexceptionable; and that the imperfections which we have been complaining of are commonly felt and acknowledged among all denominations of Protestants in this country, cannot want any stronger proof than the publication of the "Annotated Paragraph Bible" by the *Tract Society*. For that edition of the Bible is nothing more nor less than the laudable effort of a religious society, of which the object is to extend Christian knowledge, which is supported by all classes of English Protestants, and which is thoroughly acquainted with their feelings and requirements, to afford a cheap and popular work, as a means of alleviating the evils that we have been speaking of.

But what intelligible reason can be alleged for the perpetuation of those evils? Surely it is high time for another revision of the English Bible. It is now almost 250 years ago since the last was made. During that long period, neither the researches of the clergy nor the intelligence of the laity have remained stationary. The laity have become desirous of knowing more; and the clergy have acquired more to teach them. Vast stores of Biblical information have been accumulating since the days of James I., by which, not merely the rendering of the Common Version, but the purity of the Sacred Text itself, might be improved. And it is essential to the best interests of religion, that that information should be fully, freely, and in an authoritative form disseminated abroad by a careful correction of our received version of the Sacred Scriptures.

It would carry us far beyond our intention to enter upon the vexed questions of biblical criticism in this place, but we shall confine ourselves to an illustration of our meaning,

borrowed from the recent edition of some of St. Paul's Epistles, lately published by Mr. Jowett of Balliol College.

"No one who is acquainted with Sophocles or Thucydides in the volumes of Dindorf or Bekker, would be willing to reprint the text of those authors as it is to be found in editions of two centuries ago. No apology is therefore needed for laying aside the 'Textus Receptus' of the New Testament. The text of Lachmann has many claims to be considered as the most perfect which has hitherto appeared. It is the first, most consistent, and with one exception, the only recension of the New Testament drawn entirely from the earliest manuscripts and authorities. It is the work of a scholar of the highest genius, and of the greatest knowledge and experience as an editor. . . . Lachmann is the first who based the text on the most ancient authorities, solely on grounds of evidence, without regard to doctrinal considerations or claims of authority, and irrespective even of the meaning of words. The result has shown that the most

ancient text is also in every other sense the best." \*

It is obvious that the highest purity of the text to which modern scholarship can attain, is the first condition of a correct version.

Two reasons are sometimes alleged for retaining the existing translation, with all its faults and imperfections as they stand. The one, which we have never seen distinctly stated in print, but have often heard repeated in society, emanates from Swift. In his "Letter to Lord Treasurer Oxford," he says that, "if it were not for the Bible and Common Prayer Book in the vulgar tongue, we should hardly be able to understand anything which was written among us a hundred years ago;" but that "these books being perpetually read in church have proved a kind of standard for language;" and, since this cannot be denied, it is argued, that the translation of the Old and New Testament should remain as it is, with a view of securing a certain fixedness and permanency

\* Preface to "St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians, &c.," by the Rev. B. Jowett.



to the language of the country. Now, this argument, even admitting that any real value attached to it,—that any philological advantage, however great, could be worth attaining at the cost of the slightest religious sacrifice,—or that, in a matter in which eternal truth is concerned, anything except the distinct enunciation of eternal truth ought for a single moment to be considered, is rendered absolutely void by the constant mutability of all human affairs. Language, like all other things of this world, is given to change. Its fashion passeth away. Though the language of the Bible has remained stationary, the language of Society has kept moving on. Words and expressions which bore one sense in the days of Swift, have now become obsolete in that sense, and acquired another. Scriptural phrases, which were sufficiently clear to our great-grandfathers, have gradually but imperceptibly changed their meaning, and become altogether unintelligible to their descendants. For instance, CARRIAGE, in the Bible, signifies *the things carried*, such as baggage; with us it

means *the vehicle*. PREVENT, in the Bible, signifies *to help by anticipation*; with us it means *to hinder*. TO LET, in the Bible, often signifies *to obstruct*; with us it means *to permit*. PITIFUL, in the Bible, signifies *full of pity*; with us it means *contemptible*. MEAT, in the Bible, signifies *food*; with us it means *the flesh of animals*. BY, in the Bible, sometimes signifies *against*; with us it has no such meaning.\* OF, to the confusion of many a passage, and the bewilderment of many a reader, is continually used as synonymous with *by*; a sense which it has so entirely lost, that Gifford has a note upon it in his "Massinger." AFTER no longer means *according to*, as it did of old, but is restricted to the sense of *behind*, whether referring to time, or place, or person. Perhaps, the differences which have taken place in the use of these smaller words may be more injurious than any others, as they tend to give a vagueness to the meaning of the Sacred Text, and thus occasion fanatical feelings and mys-

\* 1 Cor. iv. 4., "I know nothing *by* myself," — *i. e.* *against* myself.

tical interpretations. In the Sermon on the Mount, we find, "Take no thought for the morrow." *To take thought* formerly implied "to be anxious or distressed." The phrase is so used by Shakspeare in "*Julius Cæsar*."\* And in the age in which our translation was made, it very correctly expressed the sense of the original text. But at present, in consequence of the changes that have occurred in our language, it has not only ceased to convey our Saviour's precept, but inculcates a carelessness of life, which is incompatible with the Christian grace of Prudence. In the cases mentioned above, the words still remain with us, though their acceptation has been altered; but there are many words retaining their place in our version of the Scriptures which are no longer current among the people, and of which the signification is only known to the literary

\* Brutus speaking of Mark Antony, says: —

"If he love Cæsar, all that he can do  
Is to himself, *take thought* and die for Cæsar."

*Julius Cæsar*, act 2. s. 1.

antiquarian.\* How many of us are there who have any notion of what is meant by "*ouches*," "*taches*," "*habergeon*," "*brigandine*," "*knops*," "*neesings*," "*mufflers*," "*wimples*," "*tabring*," or a number of other obsolete terms, which nobody, among the ordinary class of English readers, is ever likely to meet with, except in the pages of the Bible?† The instances we have now given are extracted from a long list; but we do not conceive that it can be necessary to cite any more of them. The few we have produced are quite sufficient to show that, however de-

\* Dr. Blaney, when he revised the printed University copies of the Bible, in 1769, made a few alterations, and on his own authority substituted the modern for the obsolete word. This was a bold and hardly warrantable measure, though it extended no farther than printing *more* for *moe*; *midst* for *mids*; *owneth* for *oweth*; *jaws* for *chaaws*; *alien* for *alient*; &c. And this is the only attempt to adapt the language of our Scriptures to the common speech of the people that has been made since the year 1603.

† A very useful little book has been published in Dublin, called "Obsolete Words and Phrases in the Bible and Apocrypha." It is written by the Rev. Joh Booker, A.M., Vicar of Killurin.

sirable it may be to secure permanency to the English tongue, that end can never be attained by leaving the translation of the Scriptures in an unimproved condition, and setting it up as an immovable standard. The standard may be kept immovable; but the language will be sure to run away from it. "And," says Bishop Horsley\*, "if the phraseology of the Bible were not changed from time to time, to keep pace in some degree with the gradual changes in common speech, it would become unintelligible to common people." We admire as cordially as Swift did, or as any man can, the "*strength*, the *beauty*, and the *simplicity*" of our authorised translation of the Sacred Scriptures. We are the last who would wish to part with or to injure it. We do not desire to have it superseded, but *revised*. And we cannot perceive any reason whatever why, because its faults are corrected, its deficiencies supplied, and its obscurities rendered clear, either its *strength*, its *beauty*, or its *simplicity* should

\* Preface to his Translation of Hosea.

suffer scathe or diminution. On the contrary, we conceive that, if the required alterations were made in accordance with the spirit of the old translation, those qualities would become more prominent as the book was rendered more easily intelligible.

But there is another, a more general and plausible, objection to the alteration of our Common Version : — it ought not to be touched, because it has, for centuries, been held in reverence by the people. We admit the fact. It has obtained, and most deservedly so, the deep and affectionate reverence of our Protestant population ; but how is that any reason against its being rendered more worthy of the deep and affectionate reverence with which they regard it ? If their reverence extend beyond the respect that is due to the most accurate and complete translation of the inspired writings, which, on the whole, has ever been submitted to the contemplation of the unlearned disciples of the Gospel ; if their reverence attaches to its admitted errors and deficiencies, — such a feeling is not pious but

superstitious ; and it ought not for a moment to be deferred to as an impediment in the way of so great a blessing as an improved edition of the sacred volume. It classes, as an instance of ignorance and folly, with the popish priest's obstinate adherence to his old *mumpsimus*, which has been a jest among Protestants ever since the first dawn of the Reformation. They who would resist the elimination of the palpable mistakes, and the acknowledged imperfections of our English Bible, from an apprehension of offending the religious prejudices of the people, are guilty of a pious fraud, which, though of a lighter shade of guilt, ranks in the same vicious category with the practice of the Romanist, who lends his support to the perpetuation of a belief in fictitious relics, or endeavours to sustain the faith of his flock by the contrivance of a fraudulent miracle. In dealing with a book, of which Divine truth is the argument, nothing ought to be regarded but the means of rendering it the most distinct and perfect reflection of that truth ; and if our present translation do not afford such a distinct

and perfect reflection, it ought to be subjected to a course of continuous and careful revision, till it shall. But even supposing that this confidence of the people in the immaculate excellence of the English Bible were as deeply impressed and generally diffused as some of us imagine; and that, hitherto, we have evinced a salutary caution in respecting it, the time for such forbearance has now ceased. The popular belief in its perfection must gradually fade away before the cheap dissemination of such works as that of which the title stands at the head of the present article, and in every page of which some error of the translation is exposed and an amendment suggested. For instance, in the 819th page of the "Annotated Paragraph Bible," which contains no more than seventeen verses of the 8th chapter of Jeremiah, we meet with the following corrections :

*Text.* — " Shall they fall and not arise ?

Shall he turn away and not return ? "

(*Jeremiah*, viii. 4.)

*Note.* — " These are proverbial questions, ' Will not those who fall try to rise ? Will not one who has taken a wrong course turn back ? ' "



*Text.*—"The crane and the swallow."

(*Jeremiah*, viii. 7.)

*Note.*—"Rather, 'the swallow and the crane.'"

*Text.*—"Lo, certainly in vain made he it (*i.e.* the Law);  
The pen of the scribes is in vain."

(*Jeremiah*, viii. 8.)

*Note.*—"Rather, 'But, behold the false pen of the  
scribe hath turned it into falsehood.'"

*Text.*—"When I would comfort myself against sorrow,  
My heart is faint in me." (*Jeremiah*, viii. 18.)

*Note.*—"Rather, 'My joy within me is sorrow, my  
heart within me is faint.'"

*Text.*—"Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter  
of my people,  
Because of them that dwell in a far country."

(*Jeremiah*, viii. 19.)

*Note.*—"Rather, 'Of the daughter of my people  
from a far country.'"

These alterations are not, perhaps, of any very material consequence, but they are all found in the same page, to which we casually turned, and which affords no more than a fair sample of the rest. The corrections proposed in this book are multitudinous. They are also, for the most part, very judicious; and their appearance in a work of this description not

only proves that our Common Version requires a diligent revision, but that the great body of the people are aware of the fact, and that their trust in its perfection, which has been so long opposed against every suggestion of improvement, can no longer be alleged as a pretext for delaying the attempt. No over-weening confidence in the English Bible, even if it now existed, could be long preserved in face of the exhibition which "the Annotated Paragraph Bible" has set so popularly before them, and in which they see the *wrong* version in the text and the *right* version in the note. But whatever course our ecclesiastical authorities may pursue, they may depend upon it, that the Bible will not long be allowed to remain in its present mutilated and unsatisfactory condition. Whatever the public may demand, will in some shape be supplied. The move, now taken by the Religious Tract Society, will not end in the present publication. The more the Committee of Management dare, the more adventurous will they grow in daring. After no very long interval from the completion of

their Bible, we may expect to see the reading of the text and of the notes change places, and a revised edition of the Sacred Scriptures appearing under the auspices and from the press of the Tract Society.

Now, this is an evil which we do most earnestly deprecate. With all our anxiety to witness the issue of a corrected translation of the Sacred Scriptures, which, we believe, would most powerfully serve to direct attention to them, and produce among us a most whole some kind of religious revival; we should deeply regret to find it attempted without authority, at the expense of an unlearned society, and under the direction of an anonymous editor. The Holy Bible, on the right understanding of which the salvation of us all depends, ought not to be thus lightly or irreverently dealt by. What we should desire would be, to see such a company of erudite persons appointed by the Royal Head of the Anglican Church for the execution of the task required, as were selected by James the First, for the last revision of the Sacred Volume —

but with this addition, that they should constitute a *Permanent Commission*; that when any vacancy occurred in their body, a successor should be chosen in his place, from among the most eminent Hebrew and Greek and English scholars of the Kingdom; and that the important office of guarding, superintending, and perfecting the text of the Inspired Writings, both in the original languages and in the translation, should be entrusted to their charge. In the performance of these sacred duties, they would be expected to avail themselves of every discovery for the purification of the original; to suggest such improvements in the translation, as might best serve to disseminate among the ignorant the benefit of their researches; and, above all, to publish, from time to time, and at no long intervals, under the sanction of their joint authority, improved editions of the Hebrew, Greek, and English Scriptures. By the blessing of Divine Providence on the labours of so competent a body, we might reasonably hope to find ourselves eventually in possession of such a version of the Bible, as should correctly

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represent the sense of the inspired writers ; and —as the sense of the authorities to which all Christians appeal was set more fully, distinctly, and accurately before them—we do most seriously believe, not only that the piety of the people would increase, and that their unchristian differences would diminish ; but that The Book —powerful in its own incomparable wisdom and beauty—would conciliate to itself readers from among all classes of society, and impress its readers of every class with an irresistible conviction of its divine origin and truth.

THE END.

LONDON:  
Printed by SPOTTISWOODE & Co.,  
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